

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic White Hall (Preferred) (VHLC File #36-51)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number VA Route 668 - 6 mi. SE of Gloucester Court House N/A not for publication

city, town Zanoni X vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Gloucester code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private/residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Gene K. and Judith B. Connor

street & number White Hall

city, town Zanoni X vicinity of state Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of Circuit Court, Gloucester County Court Building

street & number U. S. Route 17

city, town Gloucester Court House state Virginia 23061

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (See continuation sheet #1)

title 1) HABSI has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1959 federal state county local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Sited on the Ware River in Gloucester County, White Hall is a 2½-story temple-form dwelling of brick, built by Dr. Samuel Powell Byrd about 1836. The structure stands on a high basement and is covered with a gable roof, having pediments with lunette windows on the principal elevations. The east or river front of the main house is shaded along its entire extent by a modern Doric portico with a balustraded roof deck -- all carried on an arcaded brick foundation. A one-story brick wing, also on a high basement, extends southward from the house along this front. On the west or land front, a smaller pedimented Doric porch, also modern, shelters the first-floor entrance. In plan, a stair passage runs transversely across the land front of the house, opening into large rooms facing the river. The house has been altered somewhat over the years but remains largely original inside and out. It is maintained in excellent condition by the present owners as are the surrounding grounds.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

On its exterior, White Hall has seen a number of porches, balconies, and wings come and go. Earlier, both land and river fronts appear to have had single-story, tetra-style porticos. Both appear in early photos of White Hall now at the Virginia State Library. Also shown in these photos is a single-story frame extension on piers, attached to the southeast corner of the house. This frame structure and subsequently a larger frame wing preceded the modern brick addition which now extends southward from the house.

At some point there appears to have been a northward extension as well, opening into the north end of the first-floor stair passage. According to the present owners, foundations for this north wing were recently located with a steel probe. After the wing was removed, the door opening (currently a window) was allowed to remain and balconies were installed here and at the land-front entrance. These balconies were apparently removed ca. 1938 when the house was restored by John G. Hayes. The present porches are believed to date from this restoration. The west or land-side entrance opening into the stair passage appears to have been reworked when these new porches were erected. The exterior trim of the door is modern (though fashioned with 18th-century profiles) and the masonry around it has been reworked, having a steel lintel over the door head. Also the result of alterations are two small, square windows flanking the land-front gable, and the middle, second-floor window on the south elevation. None of these windows appear in the early photos mentioned above.

Inside, in the first-floor passage, stands the original open-string stair with its oval, walnut railing, scrolled brackets, and rectilinear balusters. The newels and newel responds retain the vestigial form of Doric columns, but swell at the middle where their maximum diameter is marked with a scribed line.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates ca. 1836 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built ca. 1836 by Dr. Samuel Powell Byrd, White Hall in Gloucester County is the successor to an earlier brick dwelling, long the seat of the prominent and powerful Willis family. It is an excellent example of the temple-form dwelling type so popular in this region during the early decades of the 19th century. Through such antecedents as the Semple House in Williamsburg and the Marshall House in Richmond, White Hall seems ultimately related to various published sources, among them, Robert Morris's Select Architecture. With its classical, temple-like mass, White Hall epitomizes the neo-classical spirit which pervades early American decorative art. Politically, morally, intellectually and culturally, neo-classical decorative forms were expressive of the new nation's collective temperament and self-image. White Hall thus embodied a complex of qualities and values thought to be uniquely American. Its interior arrangement typifies a popular adaptation of the side-passage plan wherein the stair passage runs transversely across the front of the house. The side-chimney arrangement at White Hall, leaving the rear elevation free of chimneys, represents the ultimate development of this plan-type. The house and grounds are in excellent condition and retain much of their historical character.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The land upon which White Hall now stands was patented in 1666 by Francis Willis, the first to bear that name in Virginia. From 1658 until the time of his return to England in 1675, Willis held a seat on the Council and played an important role in the affairs of the colony. Following his death in 1691, a nephew, also named Francis, inherited his lands in Virginia. It was this Francis Willis II who became progenitor of the prominent and powerful Willis family of Virginia. The White Hall estate, known as such as early as the 1770s, remained in the Willises' possession until 1802, when it was sold from the estate of Francis Willis V to Richard Corbin of Laneville, King and Queen County. Shortly after acquiring White Hall, Corbin insured the extant house dwelling for \$6000. His policy, dated 1803, described the house then standing on the property:

A brick dwelling house 56 feet by 22 one story high with a hipt roof built of brick and covered with wood & the walls covered outside with plaster... A wing 17 feet by 25 of the same height & substance... ¹

This structure apparently preceded the present dwelling and, with its stuccoed exterior, may have given the estate its present name. By 1815, this house was described as "verry much out of order", and its value assessed at only \$1000. The kitchen had fared even worse, being "intirely down to the ground work".²

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #5)

- A.P.V.A. Epitaphs of Gloucester and Mathews Counties in Tidewater, Virginia, Through 1865.
Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1976.
- Anderson, Arthur, comp. Unpublished mss. notes on the Willis family in the possession of Mr. & Mrs. Gene K. Connor, White Hall.

10. Geographical Data (See Continuation Sheet #5)

Acreeage of nominated property 6.8 acres

Quadrangle name Achilles, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>369710</u>	<u>4136700</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point on the E side of VA 668, approximately 1500' N of Wilson Creek; thence extending approximately 900' E following S side of private entrance drive; thence approximately 100' SSE; thence approximately 70' ESE; thence approximately 145' NE; thence approximately 370' E to Ware River; (See Continuation Sheet #5)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark R. Wenger

organization N/A

date 1/7/84

street & number #4 Autumn East

telephone 55-1466

city or town Williamsburg

state Virginia 23185

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date May 15, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

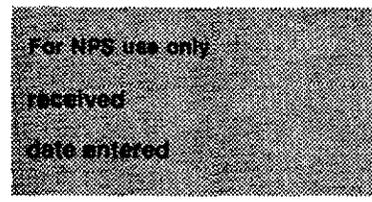
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



WHITE HALL, GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet # 1

Item number 6, 7

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- 2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission survey, File # 36-51
1968
State
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The north end of the passage is completely covered with well-executed colonial revival shelving and cupboards, installed early in this century. This and other colonial revival work in the house probably date from the Hayes restoration, mentioned previously.

Here and in other major first-floor rooms, the baseboard and chair rail date from the early 19th century and are probably original. The symmetrical trim around the doors and windows may be later, associated perhaps with the building activities recorded in Richard Byrd's farm journal during the 1850s and 60s. (Among other things, this journal lists payments for the work of carpenters, bricklayers, painters, and sawyers, as well as outlays for nails, plank, hardware, stovepipes and prefabricated sash and blinds. It is difficult to say just what building or buildings these expenditures are related to.) The floors in this room and throughout the main house are blind-nailed and appear to be original.

In both the living room and the dining room, handsome colonial revival paneling around the chimney breasts dates from the ca. 1938 restoration. The mantels are much earlier, however, each consisting of an entablature section with quirked moldings, carried on flanking Tuscan colonnettes. In both rooms, the doors opening onto the river-front porch are original.

Upstairs, modern conveniences including bathroom and closets are unobtrusively provided. In the bedrooms, colonial revival paneling on the window jambs, seats and aprons dates from the Hayes restoration. The 18th-century style chair rail, however, is a recent addition. In both bedrooms the mantels are similar to those downstairs and are contemporary with them. As in the case of the living and dining rooms below, each of the bedrooms is provided with access to the porch (rather than the porch roof) through a sash/door arrangement. Like the openings on the first floor, these appear to be original. The door connecting these rooms, however, is a 20th-century alteration.

In the stair passage an extra molding has been attached to the window architraves early in the 19th century in order to accommodate the thickness of an added layer of plaster. On the third floor, most of the trim and plaster is modern, though the original room arrangement survives, as does the original stair and railing.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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WHITE HALL, GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #2

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The basement presently serves as the primary living area, accommodating a kitchen, recreation room and office. In this office, the stair leading to the first floor has a new baseboard and treads, but the railing, balusters, and pyramidal newel are all original. The window sash and most of the interior finish are modern. The original first-floor joists, mostly poplar or gum and some oak, remain intact and exposed to view overhead. The fireplace in the present recreation room retains an early mantel, similar to those elsewhere in the house. On the whole, existing additions and alterations to the house are thoughtfully conceived and well executed.

The house stands on a cleared tract of 6.8 acres just off of VA Route 668, fronting on Ware River near the mouth of Wilson Creek. From the road, the house is approached along an impressive axial drive lined with mature cedars. East of the house, a stately grouping of crepe myrtles defines an allée leading down to the river. Standing some distance north of the house are several ancillary structures, including a single-room service building, dating from the early or mid-19th-century. This building and an early 19th-century smokehouse, standing just off the property south of the house, have been extensively rebuilt. Well maintained, these structures and plantings provide a sympathetic setting for the main house.

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

In 1820 Richard Corbin died, but taxes on White Hall were paid by the estate until 1829 when it passed to his daughter, Catherine C. Corbin, and her husband, Parker F. Fauntleroy. Fauntleroy seems to have died in 1832, for in that year, Catherine C. Fauntleroy was listed as sole owner of the property in Gloucester County tax records. Somewhat later, Mrs. Fauntleroy married Samuel Powell Byrd of Gloucester County, and both were listed as owners of White Hall in 1836. This same year \$3100 was added to the assessed value of the property "on accot. of buildings".³ This jump in the assessment almost certainly reflects construction of the present house.

Samuel Powell Byrd became the dwelling's sole owner when Catherine Corbin Fauntleroy Byrd died in 1850. Very little is known about Byrd beyond the fact that he was a physician, and a descendant of the Byrd family of Westover. A few miscellaneous accounts in the manuscript collection of Colonial Williamsburg are all that survive of his personal papers. Byrd died and was buried at White Hall in 1863. His gravestone and that of his mother (who died two years later) were moved to Ware Church in 1927.

Following Dr. Byrd's death, his son, Richard C. Byrd, became the next owner of White Hall. Richard Byrd's manuscript farm journal reveals that he had been managing the plantation several years before his father died.

United States Department of the Interior
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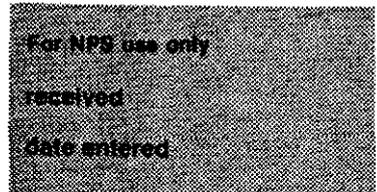
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WHITE HALL, GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #3

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Page 2



8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

The Abingdon/Ware Parish Register (1830-1916) contains numerous references to family births, baptisms, deaths and burials during Richard Byrd's lifetime. Over the years, the Byrds seem to have participated in the life of both the Ware and Abingdon congregations.

In 1899, Byrd deeded White Hall to his wife, Anne Gordon Byrd, "as a provision for her future support".⁴ Anne G. Byrd lived at White Hall until her death, duly recorded in the parish register:

Miss Ann Gordon Byrd died at White Hall after a brief illness of pneumonia. The funeral service was in Ware Church cemetery. She was faithful in every station of life and was a devoted communicant...⁵

White Hall remained in the family until 1928, when Mrs. Byrd's heirs sold the property. After several such transactions, it was purchased by John G. Hayes and his son, both of Richmond, in October of 1938. Hayes is believed to have undertaken an extensive program of rehabilitation, which, in various essentials, returned the house to its original appearance. Thereafter, the property passed through numerous hands before its purchase by the present owners in 1981.

The classical, pedimented form of the house is illustrative of the neo-classical spirit which permeated architecture and decorative art in early America. Neo-classical forms were not an American creation. Nevertheless, they proved eminently suited to the expression of the new nation's emerging self-concept. Politically, their evocation of ancient Greek and Roman civilization affirmed the principles of democracy and elected self-government. Intellectually, their reasoned order and regularity mirrored the rational temperament of the new republic. Morally, their pristine simplicity provided a satisfying contrast to the encrusted magnificence of a corrupt and decaying Europe. Culturally, the authority of neo-classical forms, sanctioned by the "approbation of two thousand years", was a reassuring presence as the nation sought to establish its own artistic identity. The neo-classical garb of White Hall and other similar houses thus represented a whole complex of those ideas and qualities thought to constitute a uniquely American identity.

Through dwellings like the Semple House in Williamsburg, these temple-form residences seem ultimately related to such published sources as Robert Morris's Select Architecture. During the latter half of the 18th century, these designs inspired the construction of several extended, multi-part houses in the region, each having a large, center block. The articulation of this center portion in such structures as Tazewell Hall, Brandon, Battersea, and the Semple House corresponded with a transformation of the familiar center passage from an entry to a full-blown "Summer Hall" or "Saloon". As a result of this development, the Morris designs became particularly suitable models, since their dominant central masses appropriately

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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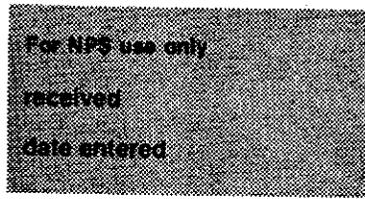
National Register of Historic Places
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WHITE HALL, GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #4

Item number 8

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

emphasized the growing importance of this space in affluent Virginia households.

Initially part of a larger composition, these central blocks were occasionally pedimented, as in the case of the Semple House, containing only the "Hall" or "Saloon" and perhaps a transverse passage to communicate with outlying parts of the house. However, this cubic central block ultimately came to encompass the entire house, standing as a detached, pedimented mass. The Marshall House in Richmond is perhaps the earliest such example.

Although plans varied, most of these cubic, temple-form dwellings resembled a double-pile, side-passage house, reoriented so that its stair passage ran transversely across the front. This arrangement may owe something to the passages in Morris-inspired plans, but its more immediate derivation from the old side-passage formula is evident in such houses as "The Grove" in Smithfield, and the Moses Myers residence in Norfolk. In both cases, the need for a second important elevation to face the side street resulted in a second major entrance into the stair passage from the center of the gabled side elevation. Ultimately, this new door became the primary entrance of the temple-form house.

In two such houses, Woodstock and the Edmond Jones residence, both in Mathews County, the transition from side passage to transverse passage is complete. In both instances the gabled front is clearly the principal elevation, though the rear facade remains encumbered by chimneys which retain their customary relationship to the plan. White Hall's side-chimney arrangement leaves both front and rear elevations clear--a decided improvement representing the ultimate development of this plan-type. Another Gloucester County residence, Eagle Point, began life with a similar plan.

¹Mutual Assurance Society Insurance Policy #2106. Richard Corbin, 1803. Xerox copy, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Richmond, VA.

²Mutual Assurance Society Insurance Policy #1191 (revaluation of #2106). Richard Corbin, 1815. Xerox copy, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Richmond, VA.

³Gloucester County Tax Records, 1836. Microfilm, Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.

⁴Ware Parish Register, 22 January 1915. Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.

⁵Ware Parish Register, 22 January 1915. Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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WHITE HALL, GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #5

Item number 9,10

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES: (cont'd.)

- Bodie, Charles and Siener, William, comps. A Guide to Gloucester County, Virginia Manuscripts, 1651-1865. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1976.
- Corbin Family Papers. Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.
- Farrar, Emily Ferguson. Old Virginia Homes--the Mobjack Bay Country. New York: Bonanza Books, 1955.
- Garden Club of Virginia. Homes and Gardens of Old Virginia. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1953.
- Gloucester County. Deeds. Clerk of Circuit Court, Gloucester County.
- Gloucester County. Tax Records. Microfilm, Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.
- Lancaster, Robert A. Historic Virginia Houses and Churches. Spartansburg: The Reprint Co., 1973.
- Mutual Assurance Society Records. Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.
- "Notes on the Corbin Family, From the Records of Middlesex County, Virginia", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 36:2 (October, 1929), pp. 365-373.
- Photograph collection. Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.
- Potter, Maud. The Willises of Virginia. Mars Hill: (n.p.), 1964.
- Byrd, Richard C. Manuscript Farm Journal and Ledger. In the possession of Olen Lewis, Wicomoco, Virginia.
- Samuel Powell Byrd Papers. Microfilm, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA.
- Ware Parish Register. Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.

10. GEORGRAPHICAL DATE -- Verbal boundary description and justification

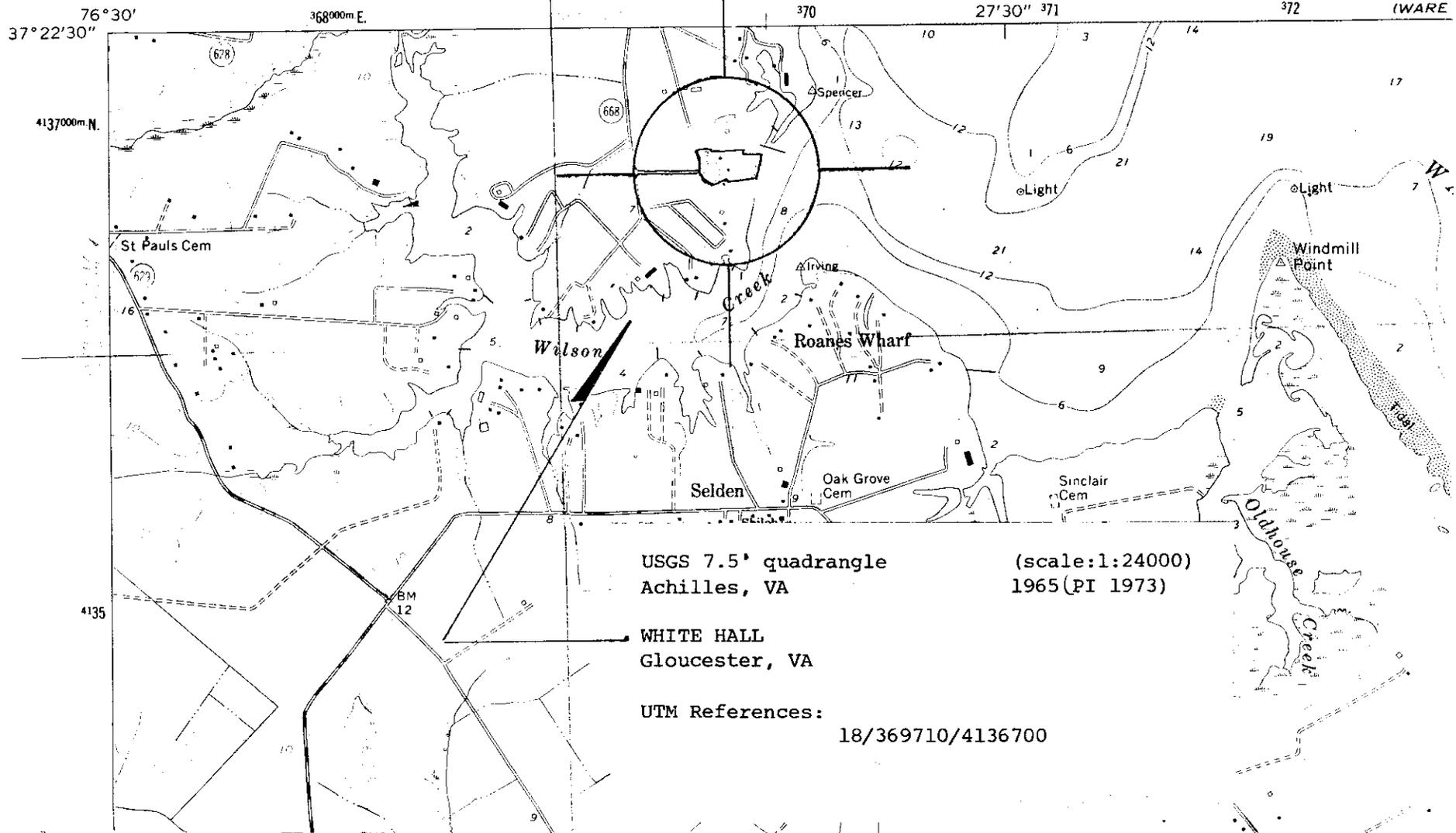
thence approximately 300' N along bank of Ware River; thence approximately 215' W; thence approximately 25' N; thence approximately 425' W; thence approximately 30' NNW; thence approximately 20' WNW; thence approximately 80' W crossing private lane; thence approximately 180'S along W side of said lane; thence approximately 870' W along N side of private entrance drive to E side of VA 668; thence approximately 90'S following E side of VA 668 to point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The nominated property consists of 6.8 acres which includes the entrance drive, main house and several outbuildings.

5658 1 NE
(GLOUCESTER)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH
DIVISION OF MINE
JAMES L. CALVER,
5758 1
(WARE)



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Achilles, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1965 (PI 1973)

WHITE HALL
Gloucester, VA

UTM References:
18/369710/4136700